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ABSTRACT

This paper reports progress for the third, and final, quarter of the 1976 grant year for the Crossroads Center, a community and regional facility in Morgan County, Alabama. It briefly summarizes the success of the program, suggests the usefulness of diversionary education for youth; and emphasizes the efforts of the staff to sharpen their skills in delinquency diversion and on the community support essential to program success. (VG)

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Crossroads Center

(A Diversion Project of Morgan County,
Decatur, Alabama)

Final Report

Subgrant Number 76-AL-19
Morgan County Commission (Crossroads Center)

Asa Sparks, Director
October 11, 1976

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Crossroads Center

(A Diversion Project of Morgan County, Decatur, Alabama)

305 Prospect Drive, S.E.

Decatur, AL 35601

The third, and final, quarter of the 1976 grant year for the Crossroads Center has passed with continued growth and maturity of approach on the part of the Crossroads staff. In reference to our prime goal of diversion from the criminal justice system, not a single new referral was made to the court during the quarter completing our entire eight month year without a single appearance back in court of 1976 Crossroads students. Our followup in the new year will evaluate the permanence of this progress.

Fifteen adolescents were entered this quarter into the program: two as post-trial diversion and ten as pre-trial diversion. This brings us to a total of 41 persons served in only eight months as compared with 25 during the 12 months of the previous year. In addition, we have had active followup services for eight students from the 1975-76 grant year for a total of 49 identified clients. There has been, in addition, a significant number of adolescents who have come to the Crossroads staff for counseling or assistance as a result

of recommendations of former students and others in the community. These needs have been dealt with on a limited basis where it did not interfere with service to our enrolled clients.

Staff meetings have continued on a weekly basis to assist in maintaining staff communication and positive efforts in working with the children. These regular periods of communication between staff members is seen as a significant factor in success with the children. In addition, A & M University provided, without charge to the Crossroads program, a staff development workshop under the direction of Dr. Mike Self.

Staff members attended conferences in Birmingham, Atlanta, Montgomery, and Decatur to sharpen their skills in delinquency diversion. Of special significance was the completion of the Alabama Diversionary Education Conference in Birmingham that was envisioned and nudged to a start last spring by the Crossroads Center Director. George Phyfer, Director of the Alabama State Department of Youth Services, as the main speaker was instrumental in developing a number of needed understandings for Crossroads Center staff members. A way to continue the Alabama Diversionary Education Conferences is needed if over-all progress in delinquency diversion and prevention in Alabama is to be assisted.

Community support continues in many way.

Monsanto Corporation donated gold and blue carpet for two of the rooms helping us to complete the redecoration of these areas of our building in bright and cheery fashion. The Decatur City Schools Maintenance Department assisted with the installation. A third classroom was re-painted in an op art design by students and staff.

The Decatur Daily featured two success stories from Crossroads Center. We are especially proud of these two students and their continued success to date. Copies of the article are included in this report.

WHNT-TV, Channel 19, Huntsville, carried a feature story about Crossroads

on the 6:00 News during September. This was followed by stories about work with delinquents in Madison County.

"Children in Trouble", a slide show about Crossroads Center was completed the last week of the quarter. Several civic clubs have asked for a showing. A Decatur Jaycee reported this week he felt it was the best program their organization had had this year.

The evaluation and statistical forms developed with the guidance of the evaluation team from Auburn University have provided an unexpected assistance in keeping up with the flow of progress. These forms have been instituted as a part of the 1976-77 reporting procedures.

The summer jobs program for 15 students was judged a partial success as 6 of the students completed 85% or more of the hours of work offered. It was probably more successful than realized in terms of regular, non-threatening contacts and in developing rapport. We feel strongly enough about the positive aspects of this venture to recommend continuation in the summer of 1977.

A summer school session was conducted in July and August for 10 new students whose main difficulties were status offenses, particularly in the area of truancy. The staff felt the program did not give enough time for in-depth involvement in the students' problems. Nevertheless, the attendance and out-of-control problems of these students are being carefully watched to determine if permanent effects were provided.

Special commendation is deserved by our psychologist, Lewis Katzmar, who has made perpetual growth a key element in his success in relating with students and reaching to the core of problem situations. Due to his skills and judicious use of behavioral education materials the group counseling sessions are both productive and accepted by the students.

The problems faced during the quarter were minimal. The major one

continued to be parent counseling groups. In writing the new grant, we proposed that the focus of this element in the program be changed to home counseling visits by the psychologist, and director. To gain experience in this area regular home visits were begun in September with the start of the new school year. Thus far, the parents have been most receptive to our efforts. In addition we have had several sessions with parents at Crossroads and in the juvenile court facilities.

A second problem has been maintenance of the GMC van. Although there are only 21,000 miles on the van we have encountered more expensive maintenance problems than allowed for in the grant. To our dismay, the Morgan County Commission has been placed in the position of meeting our van over-expenditure while unneeded funds in other areas have been returned to ALEPA. There is little lee-way in the 1976-77 budget for van maintenance. We hope things go well.

The evaluation criteria are listed with appropriate comments.

1. "Test data, achievement as related to stated goals and objectives." During this quarter 10 students were re-tested and showed an average of 1.6 months academic gain for each month in the program. During the year 28 students were re-tested with an average gain of 1.6 months per month in the program. Nine students were carried over as enrollees in the 1976-77 grant year.

2. "Length of stay at the Center before phasing back into school." Of the 41 students served this year at Crossroads 32 were phased back into school and other related areas. The average stay for the 32 "graduates" was 4.3 months.

3. "Cooperation of receiving teacher and school." This has continued to be positive although we have no objective standards for measurement. No student has been refused by the schools. This criteria is changed for the next year to one which can be measured objectively. Phase back has gone smoothly with school offical, Crossroads, student, and/or parents conferences provided as needed. One Crossroads student was expelled following disruptive incidents

after re-enrolling in high school.

4. "Number of referrals back to court." One student referred earlier in the year is still receiving psychiatric treatment. The expelled student is under the supervision of his probation officer pending further action. There are no other court referrals for 1976 Crossroads students.

5. "Progress of parents in dealing with the child." This continues to be a difficult area due to our own methods of reaching parents. We plan to tabulate parent counseling sessions in the new year to determine progress in this area. Most parents seem supportive though somewhat confused about how to reach their adolescent children.

6. "Ability and willingness of youth to adjust to school setting." Our tabulations of positive and negative behavior at Crossroads has shown an over-all change from 74% positive behavior to 88.6% positive behavior exhibited.

We felt internally rewarded by our success as the year drew to its close. Especially gratifying was the rapport that has developed between Crossroads clients and individual staff members. Using the formula developed in our first quarterly report of comparing average daily costs for Crossroads versus incarceration in an industrial school, we developed the following statistics. $4.17 average daily cost for 41 students, eight months in Crossroads equals a grand total of $41,074.00. An average daily cost of $37.67 for 41 students in the industrial school for eight months would equal $370,672.80. By diverting these 41 adolescents for the past eight months we feel we have saved the taxpayers of Alabama a grand total of $329,598.80 during the 1976 grant year. Our anticipation is for greater financial savings and continued progress with troubled adolescents in the future.